The True Place of the Sacrifice on the Cross in God's Plan

The sacrifice on the cross is part of God’s plan and has a well-defined place. We cannot diminish the importance of the sacrifice on the cross because without it man cannot reach salvation.

God’s plan includes the restoration of the sinful man which includes cleansing from sins through the sacrifice on the cross. However, God’s plan is much more complex and does not limit itself only to the cleansing of sins through the sacrifice on the cross, but also considers the perfection of our character. We believe it is very clear to everyone that the sinful man could not pay the price of redemption through his good deeds. (Ephesians 2:9)

Someone without sin had to die for this and that was Lord Jesus. (... holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. Hebrews 7:26) Scripture tells us that to be freed from the dominion of the devil, to be cleansed from sins, to be reconciled with God, to be redeemed, and to make possible the new birth and transfer into His Kingdom, the Son of God accepted to die on the cross. (... to give his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28)

The work on the cross is God’s gift for any person who repents of their evil deeds, who denies themselves, and trusts in Him. Man cannot come with his deeds to obtain forgiveness of sins. (For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9) The sacrifice on the cross makes possible the forgiveness of sins and redemption. (Who... hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13)

The sacrifice of Lord Jesus does this to put us in a new state, in which He can work with us through the Holy Spirit for our restoration and sanctification. (... sanctification of the Spirit. 1 Peter 1:2; Changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18)

The sacrifice on the cross makes possible entry into the school of Christ and is the beginning of discipleship for anyone who decides to deny themselves and enter into a covenant with the Lord. Being in the process of change until we reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, sins committed accidentally, without will, are cleansed by the blood of the Lord. (But if we walk in the light... we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us... 1 John 1:7)

The sacrifice of the Lord will be of no use to us if after being born again, after entering into the new covenant we sin willfully. (For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? Hebrews 10:26, 29)

God's plan - Restoring His image in man

To know the things that are provided in God's plan, we must research the purpose the Lord had when He created man.

From reading Scripture, we can see that in His eternal plan, God had in mind not just creating beings superior to angels, but His purpose was to make a being in which His nature would manifest; which would be in His image and likeness. He created a being completely different from anything He had created until then. (And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. Genesis 1:26-27)

We can affirm with certainty that when God created man, He had a totally different purpose than that concerning angels, who were created with the status of servants. God decided to make brothers of Lord Jesus, to populate His Kingdom with beings that would be like His Son. (For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:28-29)

We have a soul, spirit, He endowed us with the ability to think, to reason, to believe, to make decisions, to admire, to love, and to choose. This is because He decided beforehand in His plan for us to be like Him.

However, He did not limit Himself to this resemblance. God created us and endowed us with these abilities to use them, and it is our responsibility to value them, to work together with Him, to reach the stature determined by Him. God's plan does not limit itself to a cheap salvation, which stands only in repentance (putting off the old man) and in the forgiveness of sins, but includes the restoration of God's image in us (putting on the new man) and bringing us to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13)

This is the highest thing to which man can aspire. (And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Ephesians 4:24)

If the first man was deceived by Satan and his sin passed upon all, this does not mean that a mistake crept into God's plan. All things happened as was foreseen in this plan made in eternity, which God put together with great attention to the smallest details.

God begins this work of restoring the image of Christ in man at the moment of being born again and has all the power to bring us to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6)

To illustrate this, we can think of the construction of a car in a modern robotic factory, where the manufacturer has a starting point on the production line where the first part is placed. At the end of the manufacturing process, the car appears, worked and finished down to the smallest detail.

So it is in God's factory; He begins this work of restoring His image in man and completes it down to the smallest details.

If a man created by God can finish what he starts, how much more can God. God has the most advanced factory where He works together with every person who responds to His call.

He gives us new birth and transforms us step by step into His image until we reach the fullness of the stature of His Son. (But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18)

It is a perfect plan, drawn up with great precision, point by point, without missing the smallest detail. What He begins, He brings to completion. (Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:8)

In God's plan, it is foreseen that Lord Jesus will have many brothers who will be like Him. All things that appear in our lives are foreseen by God to work on our character until we come to resemble Lord Jesus. (And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28)

Our life on this earth, everything we do from morning to evening, must be subordinated to this great project of God. (If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:1)

If we do not do this, if we live this life in the flesh to enjoy it, we have not understood God's work with man and will only limit ourselves to Satan's offer, which offers us a cheap salvation consisting only of the forgiveness of sins. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. Philippians 3:18)

God, in His eternal plan, has decided to make us His children, to grow and reach the fullness of the stature of Christ. (Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him. 1 John 3:1)

We warn those who do not carefully study the Holy Scripture, who do not understand that they must reach this status and are content only with the forgiveness of sins, that on that great day, they will have a great surprise, for in the Kingdom of God, Lord Jesus will be only with those who have prepared and reached the fullness of His stature!

Many think that this standard is too high for us, but this is our calling. The true God calls us to rise from the corruption of this world, to come to have the image of Christ, for only then will we be able to dwell with Him.

This post is an excerpt from the booklet "Transformed into the Image of Christ", which you can read in full, free of charge. More studies and resources for spiritual awakening are available at https://www.unmodifiedword.com.